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UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000523

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SURINAME CLINCHES CARICOM'S SUPPORT FOR ITS
CANDIDATE FOR OAS ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

REF: PARAMARIBO 735

1. During their July 5-8 meeting in Grenada, CARICOM heads of state endorsed the nomination of Surinamese diplomat Albert Ramdin for the position of Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of the American States. Ramdin is currently the Caribbean Affairs Advisor to OAS Secretary General Cesar Gaviria. Previously, he served as CARICOM's Assistant Secretary General, as Suriname's Ambassador to the OAS, and as its non-resident Ambassador to Costa Rica. Ramdin told the local daily "De Ware Tijd" (DWT) that, if elected, his goal is to make the OAS stronger by strengthening democracies and by promoting good governance and sustainable development.

2. Upon his return from the CARICOM meeting, President Ronald Venetiaan declared that Suriname will work hard to secure enough support for Ramdin's candidacy in elections to be held during the next OAS General meeting in June 2005 in Ft. Lauderdale. When asked for her reactions to the news, Nalini Sewpersadsing, the MFA's International Organizations Deputy Director, told the Embassy that she hopes that the Central American countries would support Suriname's nominee. She confirmed that, at this early juncture, Ramdin is the only declared candidate for the Assistant Secretary General position. However, Sewpersadsing noted that Paraguay may also submit a nomination. Notably, Venetiaan's personal secretary Hesdy Pigot told the Embassy he had heard about

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the U.S.'s lack of enthusiasm for Ramdin's candidacy but he declined to comment further on the matter.

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